DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 446 CG 018 770

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TITLE Relationships with Adult Children: Support Functions and Vulnerabilities.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. on Aging (DHHS/NIH), Bethesda, MD.
PUB DATE Nov 85
GRANT NIA-AG05013
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society (38th, New Orleans, LA, November 22-26, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences; Background; Child Responsibility; Family Relationship; *Helping Relationship; *Older Adults; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Child Relationship; Self Concept; Social History; Social Support Groups
IDENTIFIERS *Adult Children; Self Reliance

ABSTRACT

The family is the primary source of supportive services to the aged in this country. A study was undertaken to examine two issues related to developmental functions of relationships with adult children: the parent's view of assistance received from adult children, and age differences in those views; and, secondly, the functions of assistance received from adult children. In semi-structured interviews, 17 parents in two age groups (65-74, 75-85) described family structure and helping patterns, and evaluated children's help. Content analysis of interview transcripts was performed. The interview data revealed that parents rarely received help with everyday tasks, but children more often helped during crisis periods. For the most part, parents were satisfied with children's help; a significant number of parents, however, were dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction usually stemmed from concern about burdening children, and sometimes also reflected long-term distance in the relationships. The oldest parents, although receiving similar types of help as the younger parents, were more often concerned about burdening their children. These oldest parents also described their experiences during the Great Depression, which they remembered as lessons in self-reliance. For these parents, the self-reliance acquired during young adulthood may be a self-imposed barrier precluding adaptive interdependence in old age. It can be concluded that optimal developmental functions of elderly parent-adult child relationships are at least partially determined by the historical context of the life cycle. (References and data tables are provided.) (Author/ABB)

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RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULT CHILDREN:

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS AND VULNERABILITIES

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CG 018770

Contribution to symposium ("Familial and Extrafamilial Relationships as Contributors to Adult Development", J. L. Thomas, Chair) presented at the 1985 Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, New Orleans, LA. Research and travel supported by NIA Grant No. AG05013.

Running Head: Support functions

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ABSTRACT

In semi-structured interviews, parents in two age groups (65-74, 75-85) described family structure and helping patterns, and evaluated children's help. Content analysis of interview transcripts was performed. Parents rarely received help with everyday tasks, but children more often helped during crisis periods. For the most part, parents were satisfied with children's help; a significant number of parents, however, were dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction usually stemmed from concern about burdening children, and sometimes also reflected long term distance in the relationships. The oldest parents, although receiving similar types of help as the younger parents, were more often concerned about burdening their children. These oldest parents also described their experiences during the Great Depression, which they remembered as lessons in self-reliance. For these parents, the self-reliance acquired during young adulthood may be a self-imposed barrier precluding adaptive interdependence in old age. It is concluded that optimal developmental functions of elderly parent - adult child relationships are at least partially determined by the historical context of the life cycle.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULT CHILDREN:

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS AND VULNERABILITIES

This paper discusses two issues related to developmental functions of relationships with adult children. First, we will examine parents' views of assistance received from adult children, and age differences in these views. In addressing this issue, we will more specifically consider ways in which experiences earlier in adulthood differentiated the ways in which parents viewed children's assistance later in the life cycle. Secondly, we will consider the functions of assistance received from adult children.

Gerontologists have repeatedly shown that most older people exchange a variety of types of assistance (money, goods, services, affective support) with their children (e.g., Cicerelli, 1981; Hill, 1965; Shanas, 1979; Sussman, 1976). The family has in fact been described as the primary source of supportive services to the aged in contemporary America (Shanas & Maddox, 1976). In her Kent Lecture, Elaine Brody (1985) poignantly discussed the usefulness of viewing parent-care as a normative family stress. The experience of receiving help provided by adult children is clearly one confronted by most older people in the United States today, just as providing support to the frail elderly is a challenge faced by most contemporary American families.

At least three theoretical models include intergenerational exchanges of assistance as a central construct. Erikson (1963) discussed generativity as an optimal developmental process with a focal period of middle adulthood. Through generativity, middle aged and elderly parents themselves benefit as they support generational successors within and outside the family. Curiously, Erikson did not specifically describe benefits that younger and

middle aged adults might attain from assisting their elders, either within the family or within the broader society.

Blenkner (1965) proposed filial maturity as a developmental milestone transforming parent-child relationships as the child reaches middle adulthood. In Blenkner's view, attainment of filial maturity implies a new view of the parent as an individual molded by a unique life history. More importantly, filial maturity implies acceptance of the parent's dependency needs as aspects of this individual uniqueness, and of one's own capacity and willingness to meet those needs. Finally, Nye & Rushing's (1966) model of intergenerational cohesiveness and solidarity cites exchanges of assistance, together with intergenerational contact, consensus, and affection, as central components of solidarity. This survey of theories describing intergenerational exchanges of assistance is certainly far from exhaustive; it is apparent nonetheless that theorists agree that helping within families is an important process, even if they disagree concerning the precise nature of this significance.

Earlier investigators have described intergenerational assistance networks in contemporary America. These descriptions are typically based upon self-reports from either elderly parents or adult children, or, in at least one case (Cicerelli, 1981), from both elderly parents and adult children. Some have identified characteristics distinguishing the children within a family most likely to help parents. Treas (1977), like several other gerontologists (e.g., Brody, 1985; Shanas, 1979; Troll, et al., 1979), noted that helping older parents is a traditionally female function. Treas further suggested that trends toward smaller families (and thus fewer daughters per aged parent) and women's employment outside

of the home could create an adaptive crisis for informal helping networks within families.

Cicerelli (1981), in an extensive study of adult children's assistance to elderly parents, also considered which children provided the most frequent help to parents. In this sample, too, daughters more often helped than did sons. In addition, children who lived closest to the parents, who felt the greatest levels of attachment and of filial obligation, and who displayed the greatest level of attachment behaviors provided the most frequent help to parents. Not surprisingly, children who provided the most frequent help to parents were also the children who experienced the greatest level of personal strain related to helping.

Other researchers have described relationships between family structural characteristics and intergenerational helping patterns. In these studies, when either the adult child (Cicerelli, 1983) or the elderly parent (Longino & Lipman, 1982) experienced marital disruption, the parent received significantly less help. In another study, older parents who were childless or who had only one child received more help from relatives other than children and from non-family sources than did parents who had two or more children (Cicerelli, 1981). Gelfand et al. (1978) considered consequences of the changing generational structure of American families for intergenerational support patterns. These authors suggested that with increasing frequency of families including multiple "aged" generations may appear increased difficulties for offspring attempting to provide economic, psychological, and social support to these elders.

Other researchers have investigated subjective reactions to intergenerational exchanges of assistance. Most often, these examinations have focused upon

stresses experienced by adult sons and daughters. Research findings consistently document a variety of strains that adult children report related to helping frail elderly parents. These stresses include conflict between the caregiving role and other important roles (e.g., worker, parent, spouse), financial strain, and fatigue (e.g., Brody, 1985; Cantor, 1983; Clark & Rakowski, 1983; Simos, 1973).

Investigators who have considered elderly parents' subjective reactions to adult daughters' and sons' assistance have noted that parents are often concerned about burdening their sons and daughters with needs for assistance (Cantor, 1983; Clark & Rakowski, 1983; Simos, 1973). Like these investigators, Cicerelli (1981) found that elderly parents participating in his research expected less filial obligation from their children than the children considered appropriate. Paradoxically, Cicerelli also found that older parents desired a greater extent of services from adult children, should the need arise in the future, than adult children felt committed to provide. Apparently, concern over caregiver burden does not prevent older parents from specifying their children as preferred sources of support during periods of need. In addition, researchers have reported that parents occasionally complain about disagreements with their children concerning the relative importance of various types of services that the children might provide (Cicerelli, 1981; Simos, 1973).

Earlier researchers have provided, then, a great deal of information describing intergenerational assistance networks and concerns related to intergenerational assistance. However, important questions remain concerning older parents' views of help that they receive from their daughters and sons. Although a few researchers have explored these views,

relatively little is known about older parents' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages inherent in having adult children help, or about individual differences in these perceptions. Furthermore, previous work has not clarified the developmental function of the experience of receiving assistance from adult children, as the elderly parent views that experience. Given the heterogeneity of the aged population, and the growing diversity of family forms in contemporary America, it is crucial to learn which older parents, with which types of families, are particularly satisfied or dissatisfied with the help that they receive from their daughters and sons, and what types of functions older parents believe that children's assistance fulfills.

In this paper we will describe older parents' views of assistance that they receive from their adult sons and daughters, and age differences that we observed in these views. We will use these descriptions as a basis for outlining functions of these helping networks from the parent's perspective. Earlier research on older parents' concerns regarding intergenerational assistance suggested two possible findings. First, we expected that parents would be concerned about caregiver burden that their children might experience. Secondly, we expected parents to describe intergenerational assistance as a process closely related to family cohesion. The latter expectation reflected both Nye & Rushing's (1966) model of intergenerational solidarity and cohesion, and a logical extension of the anticipated concern about burdening children. Such concern may itself stem from a perceived negative association between helping and affective closeness.

Although most research on intergenerational assistance patterns has been based upon responses to structured interviews or questionnaires used

to gather self-reports from fairly large samples, this paper is based upon semi-structured interviews conducted with a small sample of elderly parents. Intensive interviewing of a small group of older parents was selected as an investigative strategy which could yield in-depth profiles of family helping networks and parents' evaluations of these networks. We had three objectives in attaining these in-depth profiles. First, these profiles provide important descriptive information: since there is relatively little previous empirical information outlining parents' views of children's assistance, more extensive descriptions of these perceptions are needed. Secondly, these detailed descriptions of parents' views of their family helping networks were the basis for a structured interview schedule that we used with a larger sample of aged parents. Finally, the in-depth profiles described in this paper are also providing valuable context for interpreting the findings of the structured interviews with the larger sample.

METHOD

Participants

Seventeen parents, recruited through referrals from members of the clergy and through chain sampling, volunteered their participation. A cross-sectional research design was used: ten of the parents were between the ages of 65 and 74, and 7 were aged 75 to 85. All were residents of a southeastern Wisconsin community of moderate size (approximate population of 150,000). With one exception, participants described their general health as excellent or good, and none received supportive services from a government agency or voluntary organization. Table 1 summarizes the participants' demographic background.

Insert Table 1 about here

Most of the parents were married, and most were retired (see Table 1). Most reported white collar, professional, or blue collar former occupations, although a few of the women described themselves as full-time homemakers. Educational background ranged widely, from completion of eighth grade to post-baccalaureate coursework. The modal annual household income was $10,000 to $15,000. Most of the participants lived with their spouse; one man lived with his wife and handicapped daughter.

Characteristics of participants' families are also summarized in Table 1. Participants had an average of two children, and two participants had stepchildren. Average age of the oldest child was 47.9 years, and average age of the youngest child was 40.4 years. Over half of the parents had geographically closest children living within 15 minutes travel, and only three had geographically closest children living farther than one hour's travel.

Procedures

The senior author conducted a semi-structured interview with each parent. In these interviews, each parent answered the same questions presented in the same sequence. All questions, however, were open ended, and choices of follow up questions and of probe questions were based upon each parent's responses. Question topics included family characteristics (i.e., number, ages, and proximity of children; children's marital and employment status; number of grandchildren; frequency of contact with children), family assistance patterns (i.e., types and approximate frequencies of help provided to children; types and approximate frequencies

of help received from children), evaluation of help received (i.e., feelings about receiving help in general; feelings about receiving help from children in particular; expectations regarding children's help; perceived problems regarding children's help), and the parent's demographic background.

Interview length ranged from 45 minutes to 4 hours. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed verbatim, with the provision that potentially identifying information was omitted from interview transcripts. Content analysis of interview transcripts was performed: dissimilar categories of responses to interview questions were identified, and the frequencies of responses in each category were tabulated.

FINDINGS

Family Assistance Patterns

Each participant described recent instances of receiving help from their adult children. Reports were classified as reflecting everyday practical help, everyday affective support, occasional practical help, crisis practical help, or crisis affective support. Table 2 summarizes the percentage of reports of help in each category for each age group.

Insert Table 2 about here

Parents reported receiving relatively little help from children on an everyday basis. Reports of everyday practical help, such as regularly riding with children or having children help with errands, cooking, or housework, composed only 6% of all reports of help received (see Table 2); the percentages of everyday practical help reports of all reports were virtually identical for parents in the younger and older age groups (6%

versus 4% of all reports, respectively). Furthermore, similar percentages of parents in the two age groups reported receiving practical help from children on an everyday basis (see Table 2).

Parents reported receiving everyday affective support -- company during lonely times, information or advice -- more frequently. These reports composed 19% of all reports of help received; again, the percentages of these reports out of all reports of help received were approximately equal for the younger and older age groups (see Table 2). Half of the younger parents reported receiving everyday affective support, while 83% of the older parents reported receiving this type of help from children (see Table 2).

Parents more often described ways that their children had helped them on an occasional basis; these reports included descriptions of children helping with home repairs, home improvements or home maintenance, spring cleaning, family and holiday celebrations, and the like. Of all reports of help received, 35% described these instances of helping. As with reports of everyday help, the percentages for younger and older parents did not differ (see Table 2). Ninety percent of the parents in the younger age group and 83% of the parents in the older age group reported receiving this type of help from sons and daughters (see Table 2).

Nearly half of the reports of help described ways that children had helped their parents during periods of crisis. Furthermore, most of the crises occasioning this help could loosely be labeled normative crises of later life, such as serious illness and hospitalization, illness and hospitalization of the spouse, or death of a spouse or parent. Of the total reports of help received, 17% described ways in which children had

provided practical help during these crisis periods (e.g., provided transportation, nursing care at home, help with meals or housework); percentages of help reports in this category out of all reports were again similar for younger and older parents (see Table 2). Half of the parents in each age group reported receiving practical help from children during crisis periods (see Table 2).

Finally, 24% of the reports of help received described ways in which daughters and sons had given parents affective support during crisis periods (e.g., providing comfort, sympathy, advice, information, or companionship during crisis). Similar percentages of the total reports of help received were in this category for younger and older parents (see Table 2). Approximately two thirds of the parents in both age groups reported receiving this type of help from children.

Not surprisingly, geographic proximity of adult daughters and sons was related to parents' reports of help that children provided. None of the parents reported receiving everyday practical help from children living farther than one hour's travel, and only one parent reported receiving everyday affective support from children who lived farther away than one hour's travel. Similarly, parents reported that children living within an hour's travel provided two thirds of the occasional practical help described. Even during crisis periods, most of parents' reports of help described assistance provided by adult sons and daughters who lived nearby. Eighty nine percent of the practical help and two thirds of the affective support that parents reported receiving during crisis periods came from children living within one hour's travel.

Parents' Evaluations of Help Received

A primary focus in this study was on parents' evaluations of the help that they received from their daughters and sons, rather than simply on the types of help that their children provided. Each parent's reaction to children's assistance was classified as Satisfied or Dissatisfied on the basis of responses to three questions: "How do you feel when your children will do something for you?", "What is the worst thing about having your children do something for you?", and "Is there anything about having your children do things for you that bothers you?". Parents who reported only positive affective responses (e.g., happy, thrilled, pleased, proud) to children's assistance and who reported no problems, or only minor practical problems (e.g., can't find where my daughter puts things, they don't do the job the way I would), were classified as Satisfied; others were classified as Dissatisfied. These responses are summarized in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

Over half (56%) of the parents were satisfied with the help that they received from their children; 44% were dissatisfied. Of the younger parents, 70% were satisfied with their daughters' and sons' help; only half of the older parents, however, were satisfied. Parents satisfied with their children's assistance explained their feelings with reference to the impact of helping upon family cohesion ("it creates a closeness"; "brings the daughters closer"), the qualities in the children that helping reflected ("that they're willing"; "they do it because they want to"; "it shows that they're thoughtful and loving"), or practical advantages ("gives us something to do"; "gets the job done"). Those who were

dissatisfied with children's help mentioned the distress occasioned by a daughter's refusal to help when assistance was needed, long-standing affective distance in relationships with stepchildren, concern about burdening children ("I feel guilty about taking their time"), and a general preference to provide for their own needs ("I don't like to take help"; "I don't want to feel dependent"; "I'm more a giver than a taker").

Issues of Independence, Dependence, and Burden

As suggested by the sources of dissatisfaction with children's assistance, individual independence, possible dependence, and burden that children might experience as a result of helping were poignant issues for these elderly parents. Parents discussed their general feelings about receiving help, and their views were classified as reflecting Extreme Independence (doesn't like to receive even occasional help; would rather suffer or do without than have anyone help; explicitly describes self as extremely independent), Preference for Independence (occasional help is okay, but would rather do things by/for self; only asks for help if really needs it), or No Reservations about Receiving Help (no hesitation to ask for help or accept help offered spontaneously). This analysis is summarized in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Over half of the parents were classified as either extremely independent or preferring independence (see Table 4); 6% of the parents were extremely independent, and 53% preferred independence. Although none of the younger parents were extremely independent, half preferred independence. In contrast, over half of the older parents preferred independence, and 14%

were extremely independent. Forty one percent of the parents expressed no reservations about accepting help; half of the younger parents' responses and 29% of the older parents' responses were placed in this category (see Table 4).

Although the interview schedule did not include questions inquiring specifically about concern for burdens that children might experience through helping, several parents mentioned such concerns. In describing their feelings about children's help, 24% (10% of younger parents, 50% of older parents) mentioned their worry that children were burdened by helping. Nearly half of the parents (41% of entire sample; 50% of younger parents, 33% of older parents) believed that the worst thing about having children help was actual or potential burden that the children might experience. One question inquired whether parents should be able to count on their sons and daughters for help now and then, or whether that would be expecting too much. In response to this question, 59% of the parents (60% of younger parents, 33% of older parents) expressed concern about burdens that their children experienced or might experience in meeting these expectations.

Historical Context and the Family

Several parents referred to the impact of historical circumstances upon their families. As with discussions of concern about caregiver burden, these descriptions emerged spontaneously during interviews; the interview schedule did not include questions inquiring about historical context. One mother recalled her experiences during World War II, when her parents had provided housing and support for herself and her daughter while her husband was at war. According to this woman, her daughter and father

remained lifelong confidants as a result of that experience, and her daughter had been an important source of affective support when her father had died.

More often, parents recounted their experiences during the Great Depression; 30% of the younger parents and 71% of the older parents described these experiences. These parents were young adults during the Great Depression, and most were attempting to begin careers and families during the Depression years. There were two themes in parents' recollections. First, parents remembered the sheer hardship that they had experienced and the strategies that they had used to meet that hardship; they remembered these experiences as lessons in self-reliance. Secondly, parents remembered the closeness that they had felt within their families in the face of these hardships and in the absence of material wealth.

DISCUSSION

To summarize, these elderly parents rarely received help from their adult daughters and sons on an everyday basis, but more often received occasional help or assistance during periods of emergency. For all types of help, most reports described assistance provided by children living within an hour's travel. Most of the parents were satisfied with their children's help, although a sizeable minority -- including half of older parents -- were dissatisfied. A primary source of dissatisfaction was concern about actual or potential caregiver burden that children might experience as a result of helping. Finally, these parents generally preferred individual independence over interdependence of any sort, and this preference was particularly pronounced among the older parents.

To the extent that prior expectations concerning the study findings had been formulated, these expectations were confirmed. The parents' concern with burdens that their children experienced or might experience as a result of helping conformed to expectations based upon the findings of earlier research. Furthermore, parents made some conceptual linkages between helping and affective closeness within families. Those who were satisfied with children's help explained their feelings in part with reference to the impact of helping upon family cohesion, and a few who were dissatisfied explained these feelings in terms of affective distance in relationships with children or stepchildren. The latter finding is consistent with Nye & Rushing's (1966) model of intergenerational solidarity and cohesiveness.

Given these findings, how can we describe the functions of relationships with adult children for these elderly parents? The findings permit only discussion of the function of one dimension of these relationships -- the supportive dimension. That dimension may not be among the most salient relationship dimensions from the parents' perspective, since parents reported relatively little everyday practical or affective support from children. We stress, then, that our data permit only abstract comments about a small part of these relationships, rather than more concrete comments about more global functions of these bonds.

Most of parents' reports of help that their children provided described ways that children gave practical or affective support during periods of crisis. We therefore conclude that, for these parents, the supportive dimension of relationships with adult children represented primarily a Crisis Intervention function. Further, as most of the periods of crisis during

which children helped were loosely age-related, the supportive dimension of these bonds seemed more specifically to function as a Crisis Intervention system oriented toward helping parents to cope with stresses of aging.

The nature of the data gathered in this study dictate that two caveats accompany this conclusion. Since the sample was small and relatively homogeneous, we stress first that the generality of this function is an empirical question. Secondly, we emphasize that this conclusion is based upon retrospective data, and must therefore be understood and applied on that basis. It is possible that the relative frequency of reports of help of various types did not precisely reflect the relative frequency of actual instances of help of various types. Parents may have more often remembered and/or reported relatively extensive help that children provided during an unusual period in the parent's life than they remembered and reported relatively less extensive help that children provided on an everyday basis. In other words, parents may have been so accustomed to everyday forms of help that they exchanged with their children that it did not occur to them to mention some of this help during the interview. Although children's assistance during periods of crisis was the most frequently described category of help, it may not have been the most frequently received type of help. Rather, it may simply have been the most memorable type of help received.

Even with this possible memory bias, these retrospective data are an appropriate basis for describing the function of the supportive dimension of relationships with adult children from the parent's perspective. Taking such a phenomenological approach, it is precisely the most memorable or personally salient occasions of helping, rather than the most frequent

occasions, that define the function of this supportive dimension of the relationships. The phrases that parents used in describing their feelings about children's assistance suggest that our characterization of this function is accurate. Parents said that, although they and their children did not help each other daily, they valued "knowing they're there when we need them", "they're there when it counts", or "we know they're there". Parents seemed to view children's assistance as a resource upon which they could depend in time of need, although most preferred not to rely on that resource on an everyday basis.

This resource exhibited both strength and vulnerabilities. The strength of children's helping as a resource for dealing with age-related crises was reflected in the extent of parents' satisfaction. Apparently, children's assistance was an effective tool -- by the parents' standards -- in fulfilling everyday and occasional needs as well as in coping with emergencies. Further, parents believed that exchanging help with their children promoted affective closeness. A second strength of children's help as a resource for these elderly parents was therefore the role that these assistance patterns played in fostering family cohesion.

Children's assistance was also a resource with vulnerabilities, however. Not surprisingly, the three parents who reported that they had long had distant relationships with children or stepchildren were less satisfied with those children's help than were parents reporting close, satisfying relationships with children. The parents who reported distance in the relationships were disappointed at the discrepancy that they perceived between their beliefs about the extent of help and affection that one

could reasonably expect from children or stepchildren and the help and affection that they actually received.

Although reflecting the experiences of only a very few parents within a small, selected sample, this finding suggests that parents experiencing distance in relationships with children or stepchildren early in adulthood may be vulnerable to dissatisfaction with children's support later in adulthood. Research exploring the generality of this association in larger, more heterogeneous samples would provide valuable descriptive data, as well as a possible basis for intervention. If this vulnerability of family helping networks is a general phenomenon, then family therapy aimed at enhancing parent-child relationships early in the life cycle could be justified on the basis of life-span benefits, as well as more immediate consequences.

A second vulnerability of these helping networks stemmed from parents' concern about burdening their children. This concern was expressed especially often (although certainly not exclusively) by the older parents. These parents did not report receiving more extensive help from adult children than did the younger parents. However, the older parents did express more pronounced preference for individual independence over interdependence. These parents also -- more often than the younger parents -- recalled with pride their struggles to remain self-sufficient during the Depression years.

It seems that the historical experience of this cohort of elderly parents created a vulnerability in children's assistance as a resource for coping with age-related crises. Elder et al. (1984) have recently outlined consequences of Great Depression experiences for quality of life

in old age, and ways in which these long-term consequences may be modified by social class, marital quality, and emotional health. Our analysis suggests that an additional long-term consequence of Great Depression experiences is in preferences for levels and sources of assistance in old age. Children's help during periods of unusual need was the maximum acceptable extent of interdependence for these parents. For some, even this extent of assistance from daughters and sons was too much for comfort. Should these parents experience increased need for interdependence with increased age or frailty, they might also experience stress in accepting necessary help.

Our findings, then, support the maxim of life-span developmental science that understanding development is a contextual process. We have seen that understanding the functions of the supportive dimension of relationships with adult sons and daughters requires consideration of the character of these relationships earlier in the individual life cycle, as well as the historical events shaping the life cycle.

We have already noted two ways in which investigators might build upon the findings of this study: research exploring the generality of these parents' views and research exploring life-span consequences of parent-child conflict are needed. Our structured interviews designed and conducted on the basis of the findings of this study will provide some data describing the generality of the findings reported here; analysis of the data gathered in these structured interviews is in progress. Findings of these analyses, as well as the findings of other investigations examining elderly parents' perceptions of adult children's assistance, should permit

more extensive conclusions regarding the developmental functions of the supportive dimension of elderly parent - adult child relationships.

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Table 1

Parents' Demographic and Family Characteristics

	Age Group	
	65 - 74	75 - 85
	(n = 10)	(n = 7)
Age	68.8	80.7
	(2.94)	(3.15)
Marital Status:		
Married	80%	57%
Widowed	20%	43%
Employment Status:		
Retired	80%	71%
Full-time Homemaker	20%	29%
Former Occupation of Retired Participants:		
White collar/professional	63%	50%
Blue collar	25%	50%
Service	13%	0%
Highest Level of Formal Education:		
12th grade or less	0%	43%
High school graduate	80%	29%
Some college	0%	14%
Bachelor's Degree	10%	14%
Master's Degree	10%	0%

Self-reported Health:		
Excellent	20%	14%
Good	70%	86%
Fair	10%	0%
Annual Household Income:		
Less than $10,000	10%	43%
$10,000 - 15,000	40%	29%
$15,000 - 20,000	20%	0%
$20,000 - 25,000	10%	29%
$25,000 - 30,000	20%	0%
Number of Children:	2.9	3.29
	(2.1)	(2.1)
Age of Oldest Child:	45.1	51.6
	(7.2)	(5.8)
Age of Youngest Child:	37.0	44.7
	(6.1)	(8.7)
Proximity of Geographically Closest Child:		
In Household	10%	0%
Within 15 minute drive	40%	57%
Within 16 - 30 minute drive	20%	14%
Within 31 - 60 minute drive	20%	0%
Farther than 1 hour drive	10%	29%

Table 2

Reports of Help Received from Adult Children

Type of Help	Percent of Total Reports	Percent Young Reports	Percent Older Reports	Percent Young Parents Reporting	Percent Older Parents Reporting
Everyday Practical	6%	6%	4%	20%	17%
Everyday Affective	19%	16%	22%	50%	83%
Occasional Practical	35%	35%	35%	90%	83%
Crisis Practical	17%	16%	17%	50%	50%
Crisis Affective	24%	26%	22%	60%	66%

Table 3

Evaluations of Help Received from Children

	Percent of Total Sample	Percent of Younger Parents	Percent of Older Parents
Type of Evaluation:			
Satisfied	56%	70%	50%
Dissatisfied	44%	30%	50%

Table 4

Preference for Independence and Dependence

Independence/ Dependence Preference:	Percent of Total Sample	Percent of Younger Parents	Percent of Older Parents
Extremely Independent	6%	0%	14%
Prefer Independence	53%	50%	57%
No Reservations about Accepting/Requesting Help	41%	50%	29%